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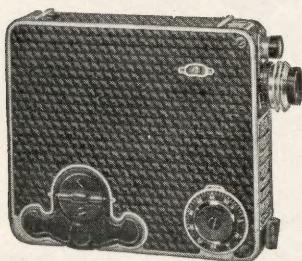
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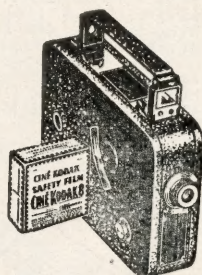


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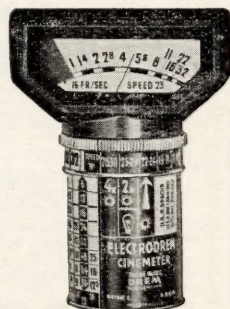
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On Lenses and Lamps

A SHORT time ago "The British Journal of Photography" had something to say on the ethics of grumbling—a luxury which, in war-time, should be sparingly exercised. It complained of the 'negligible dribble of material' that is being released for the professional photographer under the Limitation of Supplies Order.

The user of substandard cine equipment also has cause for dissatisfaction. In giving voice to it he cannot be accused of self-seeking and of an adequate realisation of the paramount needs of the moment. The effect of the shortage of which he complains has direct relation to the war effort. It concerns, too, the post-war period, for of what avail will be the fruits of victory if they have withered before they can be plucked?

There are two items of cine equipment which *Amateur Cine World* urges should be more readily available: one because it is urgently needed now, the other because it will be needed after the war if our manufacturers are to gain a foothold in reconstituted world trade.

The totally inadequate supply of lenses gives rise to some misgiving. Now British lenses are as good as any in the world; Aldis, Dallmeyer, Ross, Taylor and Hobson—to mention only a few that occur to one at once—produce first-class lenses, as the fighting forces have good cause to testify. In some respects, indeed, British glass-makers are farther advanced than the Germans.

But the Germans have built up an enviable reputation, largely because they have paid the closest attention to appearance and finish and have been so characteristically thorough. Even their cheapest cameras looked expensive and, through regular advertising by which certain names were constantly paraded before the public, their wares came to be recognised as a standard of quality. This was particularly the case in the miniature camera field.

They lost the last war, but there are many who hold that they won the economic war that emerged from the 'peace.' We must call their traditional aggressive bluff on the economic front as well as on the battle-field.

Lenses are expensive because the machinery for making them is tremendously so. One well-known German firm is reputed to have spent half-a-million pounds on plant and research. It may well be. British manufacturers, through the uncompromising stimulus of war, have the plant, and research was never more intensive than it is today. But unless the way is paved now for expansion of trade after the war, that plant and research cannot be effectively turned over to peacetime pursuits immediately the war is over. And even could they be, there would be immense lee-way to make up at the present rate of progress. The market must be created now; it cannot suddenly spring into being when the 'cease fire' is sounded.

Principal Contents

"PLANE AS A PIKESTAFF By A. Muirhead Johnston ..	7
TWO MEN IN A BOAT By Terence V. Strong ..	9
MAKING PUPPETS & SETS FOR ANIMATION By Denys Davis ..	11
EXPOSING OUT-OF-DATE STOCK ..	14
"THE BATTLESHIP "POTEMKIN" By H. A. V. Bulleid, M.A. ..	15
AT YOUR CINEMA THIS MONTH By Ernest Lindgren ..	21
DESIGNING AND CONSTRUCT- ING A DIMMER By G. A. Gauld, B.Sc. ..	24
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ..	28
ROUND THE SOCIETIES ..	31
YOUR PROBLEMS SOLVED ..	34

AMATEUR CINE WORLD is published from 324, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.1 and will be sent post paid to any part of the world for 8/6 for twelve months and 4/3 for six months.

GORDON S. MALTHOUSE
Editor

A certain amount of production, however slight, should be set aside for both the home and export markets. But it seems impossible to get British lenses for export to America. If only 5% of our output were reserved for export and the rest devoted to Government needs, it would at least enable our manufacturers to get a footing.

Then there is the matter of lamps for projectors. Here we are more concerned with the immediate present. The projector lamp has a short life. The demands made on projectors today are much greater than before the war. But when, with increased usage, your lamp burns out, it becomes a veritable hunt-the-thimble to find another.

Were projectors used by the substandard film world solely for pleasure one could not find justice complain—at any rate, not over much, although (to take a comparable case) the motorist is allowed at least a basic ration of petrol to use as he pleases. No, if one's projector stood idle because use for pleasure was impossible, one could perhaps derive a gleam of cold comfort from the fact that the owner of a television set is similarly placed, and he knows better than to grumble.

Direct Contribution

But very few projectors are being used exclusively for pleasure today. They are making a direct contribution to the war effort. Hundreds of organisations and thousands of individuals are giving up their time (and in many cases their money) to operate machines to this end. But lamps are no longer being imported and while our manufacturers are still making considerable quantities suitable for substandard projectors, the vast majority are ear-marked for manufacturers of equipment who have Government contracts.

In an effort to ease the situation one well-known firm has decided to concentrate on some of the more standard types, to the exclusion of special types; readers who have difficulty in getting replacements should therefore write to the makers of their projectors and ask if the lamps to which they are accustomed are still being made. If they are not, the manufacturer or the maker of the lamp can often suggest suitable alternatives which, with the aid of some minor modifications to the machine, will do the job. But orders must necessarily be placed well in advance of actual requirements, since there seems to be little prospect of either manufacturer or retailer being able to supply from stock.

There cannot, however, be much prospect of any improvement in this state of affairs when even the Army itself is short of cine equipment. The Army is interested in films

from three aspects: military training, education and recreation, and the aim is to utilise as far as possible the same projectors to show all three types of film. The War Office scheme embraced the provision of 150 35mm. mobile sound cinema lorries and 150 16mm. portable sound projectors, in addition to 100 16mm. projectors already in use.

Because of difficulties in obtaining supplies, the delivery of the 35mm. mobile units has been slow, so as a temporary measure 50 mobile 16mm. projectors with civilian operators were hired, but are being replaced as the standard outfits are delivered. The programme of 16mm. projectors is proceeding satisfactorily. Nearly £500,000 has already been provided for the purchase of equipment and the production of films.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that the authorities recognise the great value of the film. Is its vital work to be impeded through lack of supplies? We suggest that, since our own lamp manufacturers are already working to capacity, the embargo on imports should be lifted—at any rate, temporarily, in order to satisfy immediate needs. Valuable apparatus that can do so much useful work in the national interest must not be allowed to stand idle because lamps are not available to keep it going.

THE EDITOR.

PRICE SEVENPENCE

We very much regret that, although last month we stated that the price of *Amateur Cine World* would not be increased, "Price Sevenpence" stares at you from the cover of this issue. But since our notice last month—and it necessarily had to be written some weeks before the magazine was published—we have been faced with further increases in production costs. We are sure that readers will understand that the extra penny on the price is not of our seeking and that we would have avoided it had it been at all possible to produce the magazine at the old price.

Despite the fact that you have had to dig a little deeper into your pocket for it, we hope you will like A.C.W. in its new format and welcome any criticisms or suggestions.

IF YOUR COPY ARRIVES LATE....
Every effort is being made to secure that your copy of "Amateur Cine World" reaches you on time each month, but dislocation of transport due to air-raids is likely to cause occasional delays. Should it arrive late, we would ask you to assist the newsagent by accepting your copy as usual. The Paper Control Order prevents him from returning unsold newspapers and periodicals and if a customer refuses to take his copy, the newsagent must bear the cost himself. Present conditions make the newsagent's work very difficult; he will appreciate your help and so shall we.

'PLANE AS A PIKESTAFF

An Ingenious Idea for a Training Film for Jim Crows

By **A. MUIRHEAD JOHNSTON**

THERE was a drawing in "Punch" some time ago of a family having tea in a garden. Mother and two daughters are occupied by the meal to the exclusion of everything else. Father looks vertically up into the sky through his binoculars. "Three hundred and seventy-eight," he counts. "Swastikas as plain as pikestaffs."

The illustration made merry with the delicious unconcern of the garden tea-party. But, with the caption quoted, it committed the error that has by now become almost classical. Unless all three hundred German 'planes were banking steeply together, no swastikas would have been visible. I mention this because, having had a hand in training a group of industrial roof-spotters, I know how hazy one's powers of recognition can become unless one happens to be a real enthusiast.

The chief difficulty in training spotters is the lack of enemy aircraft to practise on! Illustrations are rather like the contrast between the stills outside a cinema and the screen production within. Interest wanes. The official silhouettes are very dull. Of course, films have been made, but every month puts them out of date, and, in any case, they are only available to a limited audience. Why not make films of our own?

A black speck passing mountainous cloud-banks. The roof-spotter gazing in the opposite direction. People quietly at work in office or factory.

The spotter faces round, raising his glasses. A near shot of an approaching plane, rolling slightly, rather misty. The hand on the warning button. The aircraft again, much clearer. It is a Junkers 88. Down goes the button. The workers grin and move from

their benches. The semaphore "barrels" come rattling down on their masts. The 'plane again sweeping round, side view, against a swift cloud background. The spotter, crouching, suddenly jerks his head. Up over the town comes roaring a Hurricane. . . .

And so on. It can be done quite easily with models; and the secret of success is to mount the models on glass.

A lot of typical models are on sale, but the newer types may have to be made. This is not difficult, and, if a group of people are working together, will not take long. Make a point of collecting odd newspaper illustrations of new types, and study the pages of journals and handbooks dealing with aircraft and the Silhouettes of British and German aircraft, issued by the Ministry of Home Security and published by H.M. Stationery Office. There is also an excellent book in the Penguin series.

The wood used for the fuselage must be divided smoothly down the middle and tacked lightly together with glue for carving. Balsa wood is the easiest to work; a scale of an eighth inch to the foot gives models from four to ten inches in length. The reason for the centre line division is that the model can be split after completion and mounted half each side of the glass of an old picture frame, as in the illustration.

By fixing the frame in a large U-shaped bracket on the end of a beam (so that it can

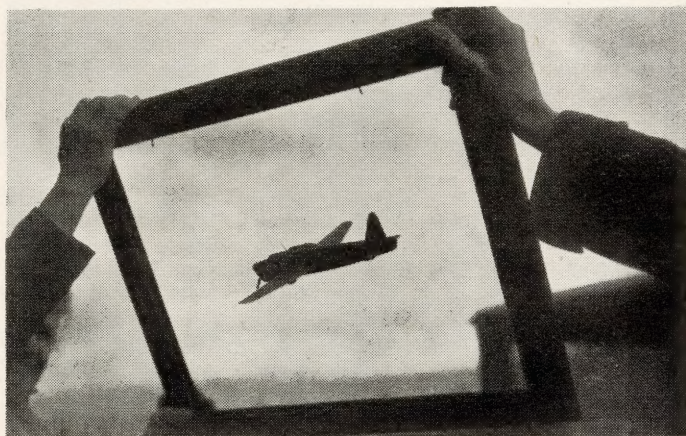


Fig. 1. Method of mounting model on glass sheet in frame.

be swung about a horizontal and a vertical axis) and attaching the cine-camera at the other end of the beam at such a distance that the frame is not visible in the finder (allowing, of course, for parallax), even when tilted or swung slightly, it will be seen that a realistic effect can be obtained.

If the beam is mounted turntable fashion and placed so that the model is visible against a good cloud background it is only necessary to expose film while slowly rotating the beam



The split model as it appears on the screen.

to achieve a perfect illusion of a flying aircraft. If an accomplice adds a judicious amount of horizontal and/or vertical rotation to the pivoted frame, the 'plane will obediently roll and yaw. This should not be overdone in view of the risk of airsickness among the audience of embryo spotters!

Head-on pictures can now be obtained for the same model by gluing it together and recutting it across the fuselage, just behind the wing. The fact that rapid approaching or

receding is rather beyond our scope matters little. For one thing, the long focus perspective of binoculars destroys this effect in any event, and for another we can limit ourselves to brief shots from these particular angles. Plan views are simplest of all, the camera pointing upwards to the underside of the model, laid on a sheet of glass. Clouds moving overhead can be suitably accelerated to "flying speed" by stop-motion exposures. Very distant shots require only painted silhouettes on the surface of the glass.

Time-Saving Hints

A few hints may help to save time and add interest :—

Airscrews are unnecessary for "flying" shots. The hub or "spinner" will suffice, though enthusiasts may care to try holding an electric fan up to rotate carved "props."

Balsa cement is strong, fast-drying, and will adhere to glass. It can be obtained in tubes from model aeroplane and toy dealers.

Balsa wood (also from these shops) can be cut with old razor blades. It glows and twists when burning, a fact that encourages the idea of a lurid finale to a "spotting" film.

Tones of a dark key, obtainable by filtering (deep yellow) and slightly under-exposing are desirable, as these obviate excessive detail in the model and correspond more closely to the usual appearance of aircraft against the sky.

Recent R.A.F. and German 'planes which might well receive attention are :—

The Halifax Four-engined bomber
The Douglas Boston
Boeing and Douglas Four-engined bombers
The Manchester, and Short Stirling
The Focke-Wulf 187 Twin-engined fighter
The Focke-Wulf "Kurier" Four-engined bomber.

The summer is here, and with it longer and more arduous hours for spotters. Let's use that film ration to give a bit of flavour to their job.

DAYLIGHT SAVING SHOOTING

NOT the least important aspect of the second daylight-saving hour is the fact that one can comfortably shoot garden scenes, etc., between six and seven o'clock (when/if one can get away from work so soon). As has often been said before, the photographic quality obtained at these hours is excellent: the low angle of the sun gives depth, and the yellowness of the rays give just the desired "yellow filter" correction which means slightly increased contrast.

Sometimes the sun drops towards the horizon as a red ball of fire, and effective shots can be taken with the camera looking directly at it: the exposure at about 10 p.m. on an average June evening is $f/4$ at normal

speed on panchromatic stock of speed 27 degrees Scheiner: shooting at one frame every ten seconds condenses a picturesque quarter of an hour into about six seconds. An evening should be chosen when the setting sun is surrounded by "interesting" clouds, and often a three-inch lens gives the very best result of all.

The next article (to be published next month) in the series on the "New Order," by Andrew Buchanan, deals with the "Shape of Films to Come." "The feature film," he writes, "is, in many respects, a masquerader. It is the Dictator of Drama in this extremely melodramatic age." In this important article he visualises the ideal feature film.

THE last shot fades, "The End" flashes on to the screen, the lights go up, comments and criticisms are made. "Why didn't you show the third man?" or "Who took it?" says someone—sometimes. Friend and self exchange a wink and, with a trace of disdain, I explain that no third party was called in; that we do not, except for one fleeting shot, appear on the screen together; that it is all absurdly simple. That is, if anyone remarks on the subject.

On the subject of criticism I should like to air a grievance. Do other amateur filmmakers, who take their hobby seriously, find their productions received by the uninitiated with an almost complete absence of criticism, constructive or otherwise? In my own experience it is a common occurrence that people who can be intelligently nasty about an inferior professional picture eulogise my worst efforts, of which I am heartily ashamed, and overlook anything that does happen to be up to standard in the general slush of "Isn't it wonderful!" redundancy.

A Good All-Round Exercise

To render recognisable the subject of each individual shot would appear to be a great achievement for the amateur, according to these people. I suppose it is simply that they just don't take us amateurs seriously enough to apply a standard in some sort comparable with that which they bring to bear on professional production.

To get back to the subject in hand, the making of a film to feature two people who themselves do all the taking is a good all-round exercise in cine. As a practical example of such work I propose to discuss a film of mine, "Two Men in a Boat," but the idea and methods used in it apply equally well to any other film made on the "no-third-party" principle.

Films of the kind described in this article are largely made in the editing. Here is a member of the well-known club, Ace Movies, engaged in editing a prize-winning production.

TWO MEN IN A BOAT

Two people go on a holiday on the Broads. One takes a film of their adventures, but they both appear in it. How is it done?

By

TERENCE V. STRONG

The subject brought its own problems by confining the two men to a twenty-four-foot boat. Thus, from whatever angle one man was shot there always had to be a part of the boat out of the picture where the other man might be supposed to be. Of course, one could be in the cabin, but this obvious way out couldn't be overdone. On the other hand, when action shots were required to be taken, it was difficult at times to get far enough away to show the scope of the action properly. It was necessary to do quite a bit of "cause and effect" shooting—that is, showing the human agency in close-up, followed by another close-up of, say, block and tackle in motion, where in normal circumstances one medium close-up would have sufficed.

Before describing in detail how we managed some of the sequences it may be of interest to say that I had never been on the Broads before; in fact, my experience was limited to rowing boats on the Serpentine. My friend (hereinafter referred to as Clive) had never seen a cine camera closer than a



shop window will allow. He was, however, prepared to follow detailed instructions implicitly, with the pleasing result that every foot of film he shot was successful. Painfully aware of my own ignorance of yachting technique, I refrained from exposing any film for the first three days until I had begun to discern the whys and wherefores. During that time I gave my partner a cram course in cine, while he in turn strove to explain to a landlubber what was and what was not done (mainly the latter) in handling a craft in narrow waterways and shallow broads.

Although it was manifestly impossible, on such a holiday, to indulge in detailed planning, I had formulated a few sequences during the three days, and had divided the shots into those which would have to be shot while the boat was under way, and those which could be "cheated" when the craft was moored to the bank. As an example I will quote a sequence as it appeared when edited.

- (a) L.S. of boat, Clive at tiller.
- (b) C.U. of Clive at tiller, showing wake of craft in background.
- (c) C.U. of self emerging from cabin and passing out of picture.
- (d) C.U. of Clive entering cabin and passing out of sight.
- (e) C.U. similar to (b) of self at tiller.
- (f) L.S. similar to (a). Clive is actually at tiller, but distance is too great to recognize.

A "Who Shot It?" Appeal

It will be seen that shots (a) and (f) could be done together from the bank. Shots (b) and (e) were shot while we were both on board; (c) and (d) were taken with the boat moored for the night. These last two explain the presence of only one man in shots (a), (b), (e) and (f). The other shots have already established movement. This sequence has quite a good "who shot it?" appeal. Another sequence starts with shots similar to (a) and (e) then proceeds, as edited:—

- (g) Several shots of passing craft, wind-mills, etc.
 - (h) C.U. of Clive emerging from cabin, passing out of frame.
 - (j) Big C.U. of hands changing over on tiller.
 - (k) Medium C.U. of self on floor of well getting grub from locker.
 - (l) L.S. from bank of boat approaching head-on, Clive at helm.
 - (m) Medium C.U. of self on floor wolfing bread and jam.
 - (n) C.U. of boat on the turn and receding.
 - (o) Self still eating bread and jam.
 - (p) L.S. of boat sailing away in distance.
- Shots (k), (m) and (o), shot by Clive with boat moored, establish me in the well of boat, and as this is not visible in shots (l) and

(n) the illusion of two men in a boat is perfect. Shot (j) is the only one in the film showing bits of us both in the same frame. It was shot on the tripod with a spare hand operating the camera.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the real business is done on the editing table. The film was shot, in a manner of speaking, back to front and upside down. A great deal of the illusion of simultaneous action was arrived at by elementary intercutting of the a, b, a, b, c, d, c, d order. Facial expression was used to "create" the absent person. For instance, a dinner-time sequence:

C.U. of Clive at table in well. He pauses between mouthfuls, looks up, and says something to the point outside the frame where my dinner is getting cold.

C.U. of self answering back, looking towards his previous position.

C.U. of him bursting into laughter.

C.U. of self ditto.

Glossing Over Mistakes

In spite of our efforts to plan the sequences, editing revealed a few awkward mistakes, such as the boat sailing in the wrong direction, change of clothes in what were meant to be consecutive shots, and so on. Fortunately, we had taken the precaution of shooting a lot of close-ups of blocks and sheets, water rushing past the bows, the boom swinging across, and a few facial close-ups as well. With these it was possible to split up incongruous shots, and explain away changes of direction by interpolating close-ups of tackle apparently reacting to changes of helm.

From the experience gained from this film I have formulated for myself the following general rules, to cover any film in which two people do their own shooting of themselves:—

- (1) Plan the film as far as possible before shooting.
- (2) Always provide a logical reason, apart from the obvious one, why the person not in the picture isn't there.
- (3) Use intercutting freely to express simultaneous action.
- (4) If the other person is not a cine worker leave nothing to his or her imagination, but give detailed instructions.
- (5) And, of course, turn the aforesaid into a whole-hearted enthusiast before the film is finished.

ENTHUSIASTS WANTED

Mr. J. Buttery, of 6, Chapel Road, Epping, Essex, will be glad to hear from any reader interested in forming a cine society in his district. He writes that he has excellent premises for theatre and studio. The aim is to make sound films.

Modelling the face of a puppet in barboula paste. Various sketches, etc., are used to ensure that all details shall be correct. The photograph also shows one of the metal figures before it has been covered with 'domette.'



Making Puppets and Sets

for ANIMATION

THE studio is now constructed and the special apparatus has been installed, so we may consider the best subjects for animation. Before doing so, however, I would like to draw attention to the fact that this type of studio is admirably suited for 'inset' filming. In any film production there are always such scenes as: "C.U. Clock hands advance two hours," or "C.U. Hand opens book," or "C.U. Cigarette smoulders in ash-tray." This class of 'inset,' the animation of maps, diagrams and special titles or routine model work may be speedily executed, for one's lighting and camera factors are known in advance and the equipment is permanently in place, ready for immediate filming.

True animation, however, is simply the trick of making inanimate objects move. Thus, on our table, we may produce a complete film from such articles as a handful of marbles, a carton of lump sugar, a deck of cards or a box of lead soldiers. Colour patterns, too, may be created from patterns of material, multi-coloured spheres and cubes, or from lines of coloured paint, sketched step by step, with a paint brush. From the above list it will be obvious that new interest may be placed upon any object, immobile or otherwise, by the aid of elementary animation.

Most Wonderful Mechanism of All

I do not propose, nevertheless, to leave the matter here, for to do so would deprive the reader of much interesting data. Let us go further and attempt to simulate the most wonderful piece of mechanism of all—the human body. It may be remembered that, in my first article, I stated that one cannot animate without a trace of jerkiness and,

The first article in this short series (last month's issue) described the apparatus needed for making a start on a short film of animated puppets.

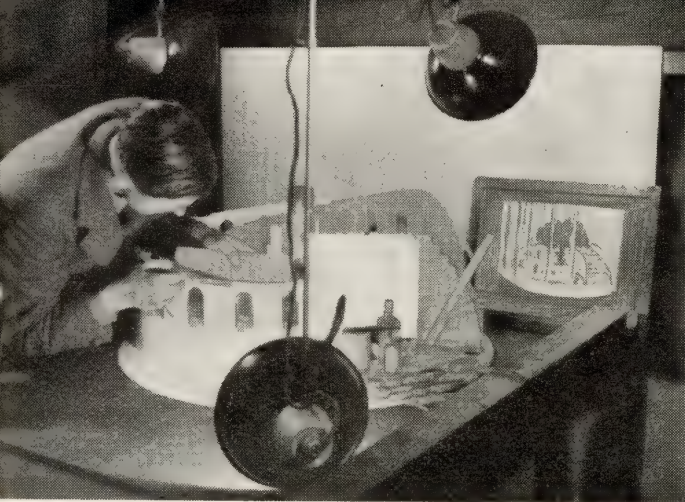
By DENYS DAVIS

therefore, copying human life was, in our opinion, unsatisfactory.

This point still holds good. But imagine a little man with a strange old face upon a human frame. Let us now make the face a caricature, and any jerkiness in his movements will be readily accepted by every member of your audience. Luxor Films have done this in their production, "Strange Tactics" (which I am quoting as a working example throughout this series) and I would like you to meet our 'stars.'

Introducing the 'Stars'

First comes General Gaunt, Retd., a nice old boy with a heart of lead. A careless twist of his extravagant moustache, or a flick of his bushy eyebrows, used to shake the parade-ground way back in '02. To offset his ruggedness, may I introduce his co-star, Nicolette, the pretty, dark-eyed juvenile lead at the local "Rep." To you our 'stars' may be just lead and scraps of cloth, but, to us, who have worked with them so long, they have become vibrant personalities with a will of their own. Ever since production of the film commenced, the General has attempted, in vain, to arrange a rendezvous with Nicolette. She, however, already has a mink coat and a flat in town so the General has, so far, met with little encouragement.



Artist at work constructing one of the sets required for "Strange Tactics." It was built to scale from the sketch in the background.

Fortunately, he still has many feet of film left so he may be successful eventually.

"Strange Tactics" is being shot in Kodachrome, but we are not, however, attempting to reproduce the natural tints of Nature. Instead, every detail of the scenery, sets and 'props,' as well as the faces and hands of the actual puppets, are highly varnished. This bright effect reflects the lighting and creates a sense of 'solidity,' which greatly enhances the production. This brilliant colouring would be most difficult to reproduce on a life-size scale, but is simply effected in miniature.

Three and a half months were spent experimenting in the construction of our puppets before satisfactory results were obtained. Admittedly we tackled the most difficult subject—human bodies—that could be found, but the figures so evolved are, in our opinion, successful. The basis of the puppets is a metal figure, standing some 8ins. high, which has ball and socket joints at the shoulders, elbows, wrists, thighs, knees and ankles to enable it to be moved to simulate human motions. These figures, termed "lay" models, may be obtained from shops selling artists' requirements.

Adaption for Animation

The figures, unfortunately, cannot be used as they are manufactured, so I will give a brief description of their adaption for animation purposes. First, the head was removed so that it could be remodelled later with barboula paste in any desired character. Thin strips of 'domette' (which may be purchased at drapers) were glued over each joint and left to dry. Using a fine sable brush, thin layers of 'Cow' were then painted over the entire figure which was left to dry for at least three hours between each layer.

This treatment makes a passable 'skin' and is the result of many tests.

'Cow,' mentioned above, is a clear plastic rubber solution using, I understand, amyl acetate as a solvent and is occasionally sold as 'milliners' paste' or as a photo mountant.

An artist's colourman, however, will sell it as 'Cow.'

The lay figure, as sold in the shop, has an old-fashioned head upon it which was useless for our purpose. By cutting the head into a square block with a fine hack-saw and remodelling it into one of character, however, we finally managed to produce attractive puppets. The figures were painted with poster-colours, by means of very fine tipped brushes, and, when dry, sprayed with several coats of varnish. Special clothing was made upon these models from the art director's sketches. In this connection, I would like to state that we were unable to make female legs sufficiently realistic so these puppets were either dressed in long dresses or in riding breeches or placed where the camera could not record their lower limbs.

Metal Pins in Heels

Finally, black metal pins were inserted in the puppet's heels, protruding half an inch downwards, which are stuck, of course, in the cork surface of the table to steady the figure. When walking, the puppet's foot moves so quickly that these pins cannot be seen because they fall in the shadow beneath the sole of the foot. Provided that reasonable care is taken of them, and that each movement is performed slowly, they will withstand many thousands of movements. The completed puppets are somewhat stiff but this, we find, is a distinct advantage as, for instance, the left hand may be moved between frames without disturbing the rest of the figure.

It will be noticed that, apart from overall movement of the whole head, the puppets' faces cannot be animated. Probably the beginner could write a script so that this action is unnecessary, but should speech or eye action be required it may be achieved

A scene from the film. This is the opening sequence in the stage revue.



later in close-ups. A series of heads, preferably on a much larger scale, should be cast from plaster of paris, leaving a rough block of plaster over the mouth. This excess material should then be carved away by hand, on each individual head, into a series of mouth formations representing the vowel sounds, etc. Below the head, a square peg should be cast for insertion in a square hole made in a model of the character's neck and shoulders.

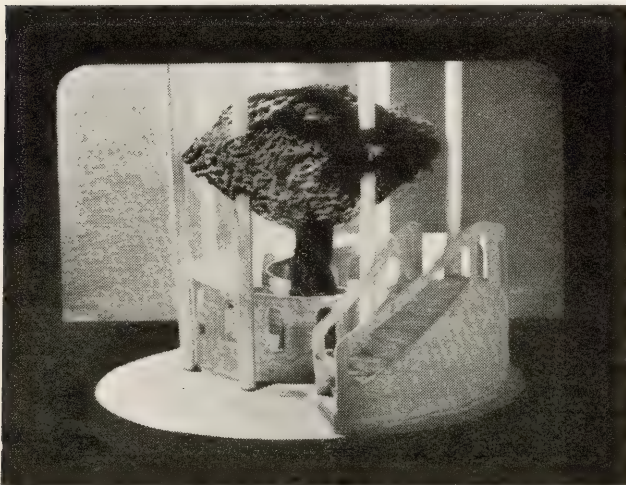
When filming, this shoulder model should be securely mounted before the camera while the heads are inserted in a suitable order to represent speech. The same system holds good, of course, for eye or ear movement. It is only fair to state that, at the time of writing, we have found it unnecessary to utilise this system. Any attendant difficulties, however, should not be insurmountable, for the method described is regular professional procedure.

The sets must be made to careful scale from their actual prototypes, using wood, card, canvas and plaster, etc., but it is unnecessary to give many practical details of this section of film animation as the subject

has already been fully treated in previous articles on model work.

It will be remembered from the previous article in this series that the special camera may be tracked to and from the set in one direction only. A turntable was constructed, however, and thus one may get a side angle by moving this although, where this action is not required, one may build a set across the whole table, using the wood framework at the rear for large backgrounds. It might be thought that this method gives a series of camera angles that might soon be recognised in the course of a production, but this is not the case, of course, as an unlimited number of camera angles may be evolved. Thus we reverse normal studio

procedure. In animation, it is the set and not the camera which moves; and it is obvious that tricks, such as rear-projection and the creation of a false perspective, may readily be attempted on this miniature scale with superb results.



The largest set (shown in process of construction on the opposite page) from the Kodachrome film, "Strange Tactics," now being made by Luxor Films. Throughout the action the turntable constantly revolves, as the camera trucks forward. The turntable is pale green, the stairs light green, the sky royal blue and the tree dark green. The columns are white.

In the previous article it was stated that each frame of film receives exactly 2.75 secs. exposure. This long exposure enables the set to be in focus over the total area since the lens may be stopped down (often by the use of neutral density filters) to increase the depth of focus. In fact, three supplementary lenses of 12in., 18in. and 30in. focus will usually suffice, even though, in model photography, focus becomes very critical indeed. The supplementary lenses would, of course, be used only with a fixed-focus lens set at infinity and should be placed in the special support already mentioned.

Now let us consider the special type of script required for animation. One of the advantages of this type of film work is that one may calculate, well in advance, the exact duration of each scene. Thus, provided a fault is not made in the actual animation of the puppets, one need not waste a single frame of film; but necessarily one must plot in advance the movements of each individual character in every scene.

To do this, and to ensure that the continuity shall be complete, thumb-nail sketches

are made on plain invitation cards—one for the commencement of every scene. One can purchase a packet of these cards, quite cheaply, and, as they are cut to the proportions of a cinema screen, they are most practical for the purpose. The cards should be stored in sequence when reference to them will solve most continuity problems. After a shot has been satisfactorily completed, all the technical data regarding the camera and lighting should be jotted down on the reverse side. If the cards are replaced on end one can see at a glance how far the production has progressed.

These cards alone are not sufficient for production but must be supported by a very comprehensive script that details every *individual movement* for each character—reckoned by the number of frames required for that movement. To facilitate this, it is often helpful to film persons performing the action in advance and then transfer this data across to the shooting script.

How the director utilises this script and the various methods of animation will be described in the next article of this series.

Exposing Out-of-Date Stock

PRESENT conditions may compel one to use out-of-date film stock, and in these circumstances it is advisable to know exactly how far such stock can safely be used and what special steps must be taken to secure the best possible results.

The first point is to realize that the dating system is adopted by the manufacturers primarily to ensure that dealers sell in rotation, and is, in general, very conservative. Obviously, also, a film one month over date cannot be appreciably different from a film one month within its date: the depreciation, *if any*, of the emulsion *may* start soon after the expiry date, but the effects of any such depreciation will be infinitesimal for the first two or three months.

Falling-Off in Speed

The depreciation ultimately consists of a falling-off in speed and a tendency to graininess; and, later, a tendency to local spots or mottle—but this only after several years. Though unexposed film only is under discussion, it should be emphasized that *exposed* film does deteriorate more rapidly and should always be developed as soon as possible after exposure, particularly Kodachrome.

Coming down to practical cases we have used monochrome films by the leading

makers up to seven months over date, and the results have been indistinguishable from those on fresh stock. It is, however, considered advisable to give about half a stop extra exposure if the film is more than six months past date. It is assumed that the film has been stored correctly—i.e., in a cool, dry place. A living-room cupboard answers this hack description, by the way.

Here, again, a film *just* six months out-dated does not thus suddenly demand half-a-stop more light; a *gradual* loss of speed occurs, but the point is that the latitude of even the most inferior modern monochrome emulsion is greater than half a stop, so that any less adjustment than this is unnoticeable. Actually, in the case of a reel, say, four months out-dated, one would merely tend to give slight fullness in setting the exposure.

As far as Kodachrome is concerned Messrs. Kodak advise giving half a stop extra exposure if the film is more than a month or two over date, and again experience shows that this is correct: an old reel thus exposed, and a fresh reel, developed together, were indistinguishable in quality and matched perfectly.

If, therefore, because of the limitation of supplies, you are offered out-of-date stock, there is no need to be doubtful or suspicious. Use it with confidence.

FAMOUS LIBRARY FILMS

No. 7

"THE BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN"

BY HAV. BULLEID, M.A.

S. M. Eisenstein, with his assistant Alexander and his cameraman Tissé, made *Strike* (1924—insignificant), then *Potemkin* (world famous, but little seen in England due to Censor's ban), followed by *October* (1927-8) and *The General Line* (1926-9). His subsequent work included: the ill-starred trip to the U.S.A. and Mexico which ended in the *Thunder Over Mexico* fiasco; some sound film experiments; and voluminous writings. None of these has notably contributed to film art or technique.

A brief description of the qualities of *Potemkin*, together with a summary of expert opinion regarding the film, is best furnished by the following quotations . . .

Paul Rotha, in "Movie Parade," wrote . . .
... in the third great epic film of cinema, *Potemkin*, Eisenstein used the movements of the mass to interpret the events which expressed his theme.

V. I. Pudovkin, in "Film Technique," refers to . . .

... that filmically outstanding work, *The Battleship 'Potemkin'* . . .

Kenneth Macpherson (editor), in the August, 1928, "Close Up," wrote . . .

... if I am any judge, *St. Petersburg* is not greater than *Potemkin*. I am sure it is as great, but not greater.

William Hunter in "Scrutiny of Cinema," wrote . . .

We have agreed that Eisenstein is the technician *par excellence* of the cinema. *Potemkin* is no exception; it is, like his other films, a brilliant technical achievement. Though from this point of view *October* or *The General Line* are superior, his first film remains his best. It is, for one thing, a finer whole, less diffused,

more vital and more intense, and less full of crudities. Far more than the others it is epic and impersonal. The claim that the cinema has achieved the synthesis of art and science is largely based on this film.

L'Estrange Fawcett, in "Films: Facts and Forecasts," wrote . . .

Technically, the film is wonderful... The balance and matching of the sequences is remarkable, and some symbolical meaning could be read into almost every incident . . .

Potemkin is at once the most sensational, ruthless, realistic, and fascinating film I have



Fig. 1. CLOSE-UP: SULLEN OBEDIENCE. Curiously effective use of the shadow of a grating.

seen. It has no conventional form or beauty . . .

The *Cruiser Potemkin* is one of the few films that veritably make you catch your breath.

Bryher, in "Film Problems of Soviet Russia," wrote . . .

No two people have agreed as to the most beautiful moments of *Potemkin*—tribute to the amazing unity of its achievement.

Vladimir Nilsen, in "The Cinema as a Graphic Art," wrote . . .

The second film made by Eisenstein and Tissé, *The Battleship 'Potemkin'*, was a brilliant example of accomplished unity in the creative attitudes of the director and cameraman . . .

* * *

The *Battleship Potemkin* was originally planned as part only of a long film dealing completely with the 1905 Revolution: the theme and material deal solely with the mass as opposed to the individual. The brief treatment is as follows:—

On account of bad meat, the crew of a battleship revolt against their officers: their

Production 1st Goskino Studio,
U.S.S.R. 1925

Length About 4,500 feet.

Directed by S. M. Eisenstein

Assistant Director G. V. Alexandrov

Photography Eduard Tissé

Based on an episode in the 1905 Revolution.

The Cast—consists of selected "natural types."

Held in England by F.B.O. Banned by

British Board of Film Censors. Shown to The

Film Society, London, Nov. 10th, 1929.

Production was almost completely carried out

on location at Odessa, between September

1924 and February 1925.

Sub-Standard availability: Wallace Heaton

Library and British Film Institute Library:

5 reels, 16mm., equal to about 4,500 feet

of 35mm.

leader is killed, and his body is laid in state in a tent on the quay. Some officers are drowned, others escape to Odessa. The townspeople side with the rebels, and in consequence are brutally shot down by the local military, whose H.Q. are in return shelled by the battleship ; which then rejoins the remainder of the fleet and receives not the feared attack and arrest, but, on the contrary, due to the spread of the revolution, a terrific ovation.

* * *

It was the custom in Russia at that time to regard the reel as a unit of construction of the film : this was chiefly due to the fact that the vast majority of the cinemas had only one projector. Hence the short period

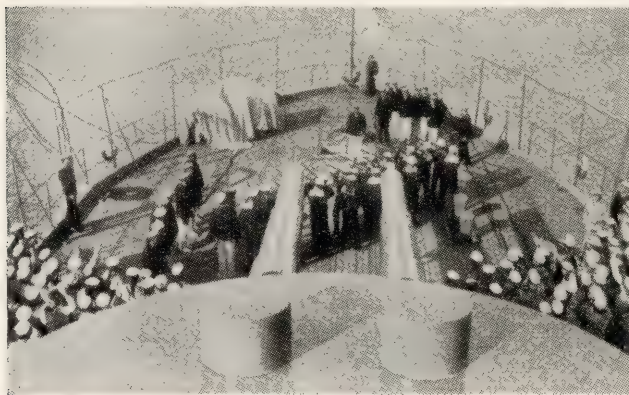


Fig. 2. The men under the tarpaulin face the firing squad.

between reels was utilised as a gap between acts. A parallel is to be found in Patheoscope films where reel-ends are arranged, wherever possible, between fades. Incidentally, when showing such films with twin projectors, it is essential to allow a pause of a second or two between the end of the fade out on one projector before switching to the start of the following fade in on the second machine : the normal custom of switching on the second before the first is completely finished (to obviate all risk of showing the part tags!) has the disastrous result of removing the time-lapse indication.

In the case of *Potemkin* the material is arranged in five reels, thus :—

Reel 1. "Men and Worms." (Dissatisfaction, culminating in the refusal to eat the borshch) (about 13 minutes).

Reel 2. "The Drama on the Isle of Tendra." (Revolution, fighting, till the body of the men's leader is laid in the tent at sundown) (about 17 minutes).

Reel 3. "The Dead Cry Out." (Rumours

reach the people of Odessa, and they are sympathetic) (about 11 minutes).

Reel 4. "The Steps of Odessa." (Food is taken to the Potemkin, then follows the massacre on the steps, and the shelling of the military headquarters) (about 11 minutes).

Reel 5. "One Against All." (The Potemkin uneasily steams to meet the fleet, and is received with cheers) (about 15 minutes).

It will be observed that the narrative proceeds inexorably without any side-tracks whatsoever. Scenes of quiet and of turmoil are, however, arranged with dramatic counterpoint, thus : in reel 1, smouldering resentment works up, with increasing suspense, to the flash of mutiny. In reel 2, further suspense culminates in the turmoil of fighting, followed by the stillness of death. Reel 3 is calm, but works up to a minor climax with the burning enthusiasm of speeches by the people of Odessa. Reel 4 contrasts the graceful beauty of the yawls taking food to the rebels with the sudden merciless massacre; and ends with the Potemkin's dramatic revenge. Reel 5 is fraught with suspense as the Potemkin steams through the night to join the fleet, but ends with the indifferent climax of the cheering reception.

The decidedly weak climax is the only constructional fault, and was due to the fact that the film had been planned as part only of a longer film, the remainder of which would have contained the climax proper. It is the skilfully balanced ebb and flow of suspense and conflict that create the powerful emotional effect of the film : and through all the action the ship itself, the Potemkin, looms as the important factor ; that is, the collective is portrayed rather than the individual.

* * *

It is unfortunate that most of what has been written about *Potemkin* has suffered from either a political or a highbrow bias. It is further unfortunate that writers in general under both these categories have paid little regard to accuracy. The very excellence of the film has prevented any challenging of the enthusiastic eulogies written about it : and its faults have hidden snugly under praises such as those quoted above. The following analysis is a calmer appraisal . . .

The film opens with a title describing the pre-1905-revolution unrest in Russia, which is followed by several shots of waves breaking : this hackneyed symbol is rendered

even more ineffective by uninspired camera-angles and haphazard shot-lengths. A title introducing the Potemkin is followed by a shot of two sailors on board, then a really beautiful long shot of the ship in silhouette, with its reflection in the dancing waters filling the foreground—a vaguely sinister effect leading up to the title: *Dark and foreboding was the sleep of those off duty* . . . a sonorous hectameter. It should be remarked that the London Film Society was concerned in the preparation of the English titles (their mark appears behind the main titles) with admirable results.

Pictorial compositions emphasising unrest portray the sleepers in their swaying hammocks: the montage at once establishes a rhythm which rises to a peak when the petty officer strikes a new rating: the blow is shown in two short shots, cut on action. At this point is introduced the leader of the men, Vakulinchuk. He is immediately established as a leader in a vigorous medium close-up. To his protesting speech the others listen in agreement: this agreement is expressed in close shots of expertly selected types, each shot packed with composed action.

Brisk and Restless Cutting

Next day, there is unrest on account of bad meat. This is conveyed by long shots from various angles of the indignant crowds around the meat, in each of which can be seen all or part of the captain, his pacing about, uncertainly, aloft, being carried through as one continuous action: the cutting is brisk and restless. Then the decision that the meat is good is brazenly given by the surgeon lieutenant, in spite of the revolting close-up of the worms: and with a shrug he walks away.

The men sullenly (Still 1) go about their duties, compared with a steaming pot by a link title, *Brimming over* . . . As the pans are set out on the swinging tables, the officer nods his head in time—an excellent touch of naturalistic comedy. The refusal of the men to eat the borsch made from the bad meat is duly reported to the captain on the bridge. Washing the plates in the galley, a rating's pent-up fury is set off at reading the inscription on one plate, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Thus, ingeniously, is a piece of anti-God propaganda inserted). The rating smashes the plate in a sequence of text-book perfection, thus:—

. . . having read the inscription . . .
 F.C.S. (dark, lowering) the
 rating mutters through
 clenched teeth — 30 frames
 C.M.S. He grasps plate and . . . — 5 "
 C.M.S. . . . raises it above . . . — 4 "

C.S. . . . his head and . . . — 6 frames
 C.M.S. . . . brings it down . . . — 8 "
 C.S. . . . raises it aloft . . . — 6 "
 F.C.S. his exultant face. . . — 6 "
 C.M.S. he brings it down . . . — 6 "
 C.M.S. . . . smashes it on the table.

—End of reel 1—

The power of these final five seconds is remarkable. Apart from the dramatic force conveyed by the rapid tempo of montage with short shots, repetition of the down movement gives terrific extra emphasis.



Fig. 3. CLOSE-UP: INDECISION. Note how the composition focusses attention on the man's anxious eyes.

The whole action could have been covered in one mid-shot lasting about one second (= 16 frames). Instead it has been drawn out in time to about 2½ seconds and in addition been given detailed dramatic significance. The several shots match excellently, and shooting must have eaten up some 8 to 10 seconds' worth of stock, the simple and obvious answer to those ignorant armchair critics who have stupidly suggested that the Russians invented quick cutting to "use up all the bits of film, as stock was so scarce."

Rambling Construction

The second reel opens with the parade on deck, where an example is to be made of those complaining about the borsch. The sequence suffers from rambling construction which can only partly be excused on the grounds that it portrays the anxiety and indecision of the action. On one hand there are excellent pictorial compositions, and in two cases superbly cut close-up flashes; on the other there are two absurdly incorrect titles, which weakly describe action about-to-be-shown. The second is *Some tried to escape by the Admiral's Hatch*, followed by a long shot of the attempted escape. Tarpaulins are brought out and flung over the small group who failed to escape (Still 2); the others converse agitatedly by the gun turret.

The firing party presents arms—well dramatised in several short shots. Some of the sailors under the tarpaulin fall to their knees. Suspense is worked up by sheer technical montage brilliance with inter-cut detail shots of the fidgeting officer, the grotesque priest, the impersonal battleship itself (by C.S. of a life-belt), interspersed with the menacing rifles, the doomed sailors, and their whispering comrades. Then Vakulinchuk shouts

TITLE (large type) "Brothers !"

C.S. he shouts (6 frames)

TITLE "Would you shoot your comrades ?"

C.S. One disturbed, anxious member of the firing party. (Still 3)

M.S. The line of rifles ; some waver slightly.

M.S. The commanding officer.

TITLE *The rifles waver*

... then the order to fire is openly disobeyed and instead all the sailors procure arms and turn on the officers.

The arrangement of the quoted part of the above sequence is of special interest. The shots chosen accurately portray precisely the important details of the action. The splitting of the title giving Vakulinchuk's exhortation adds powerful emphasis, the 6-frame close-up being dynamic. This apt montage and splitting of title wording to make possible a quicker tempo through shorter shots is typical of the Russian theory, similar to the final shots of reel 1. It was (as explained openly by both Eisenstein and Pudovkin) directly developed from the work of D. W. Griffith, in particular from the inspired montage towards the end of *Intolerance* (1916).

For the Russian developments, both good and bad, D.W.G. is largely responsible. An

example of the bad is found in the final, redundant title of the above quotation. It was a maddening trick of Griffith's to insert unnecessary explanatory titles ; in only rare cases was the desired effect achieved. Thus in his 1919 *True Heart Susie* we find the absurdly unnecessary title, *Bettina impressed* followed by a self-explanatory close-up of, Clarine Seymour as Bettina looking impressed : whereas by contrast in his 1919 *The Girl who Stayed at Home*, between mid shots at the death-bed of the father as he struggles to say his last message, Griffith was inspired to place the title *Dim words . . .* These examples clearly illustrate the axiom that the title wording must be *weaker than the action which follows*. Eisenstein unfortunately failed to grasp this important distinction, and his editing construction is correspondingly weakened.

Impressive Fighting Scenes

The fighting scenes are impressive, realistic, virile. Some officers are drowned. Vakulinchuk is shot, his body caught in a davit rope, whence he falls into the sea (Still 4). At sundown, in a tent on the mole at Odessa, his body is laid in state . . . End of Reel 2.

At the scenes taken in the morning mist at Odessa Harbour, with which Reel 3 opens, there has been levelled a profusion of enthusiastic acclaim which leaves the present writer stone cold. Pudovkin wrote :

A wonderful example (of the depiction of the environment) affording unquestionably an achievement, are the pictures of the misty dawn rising over the corpse of the murdered sailor in *The Battleship Potemkin*.

Pudovkin was making the point that environment can be chosen to add to the action-drama, for example, the snowstorm adding to the pathos of Lillian Gish's running away in D. W. Griffith's *Way Down East* (1920).

But this cannot be applied to the present case as the mist is gone and bright day is come before the tent on the mole is shown. Moreover, the first shot in the sequence, following the title, *Mist enwrapped the night*, shows a dock crane busily at work by what is obviously sunlight, a ludicrous error.

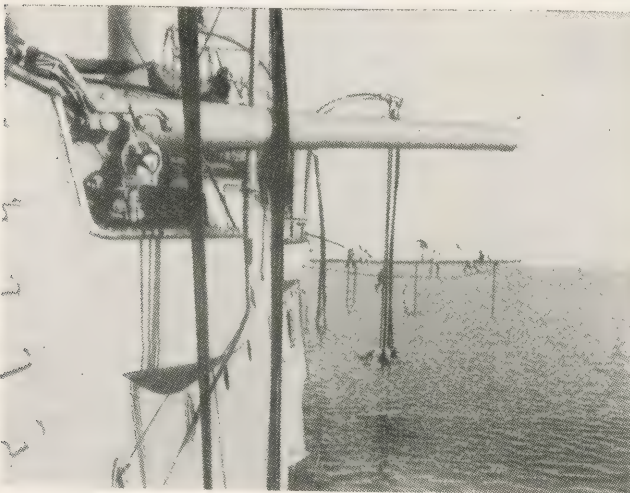


Fig. 4. "Vakulinchuk overboard !"

On the other hand, the shots are beautifully composed and lovely in texture, particularly a close-up of the sea surface; and while one can sympathise with Eisenstein and Tissé falling in love with them, the fact remains that they are redundant, and distracting from the main theme, and should therefore be cut.

The few first townspeople trickling towards the tent are portrayed in expertly and sincerely directed long and mid shots. Then follows a charming sequence as people flock to the mole, impelled by rumours indicated correctly in sub-titles set in italics. Enthusiastic sympathy for the men of the *Potemkin* runs high: Eisenstein with his masterly

command of the montage theory runs up the effect of the rising feeling among the crowds in a vigorous crescendo, the shots decreasing to mere flashes. Two dissenters are downed. A delegate from the town informs the men on the *Potemkin* that the officers have gathered in the theatre with the military, but that the townspeople are on their side. Amid cheers, the red flag is hoisted (dead black, on ortho stock). In response, crowds gathered on the steps of Odessa cheer in unison . . . End of Reel 3.

Learning from the Americans in general (and again from D. W. Griffith in particular), Eisenstein is at pains to secure heightened dramatic effect in the massacre on the steps by means of contrast and of insistence on the attitude of the townspeople. The former is accomplished by showing at some length the comparatively irrelevant business of food being taken to the battleship; the latter by the opening title of the reel.

Rhythmic movement and cutting, sparkling photography, cheerful acting, are combined by Eisenstein in his editing plan with wonderful success: and are deserving of as much praise and study as the more obviously perfect steps sequence which follows. In particular, attention is drawn to the compositional purity and shot matching: these are deeply analysed in Vladimir Nilsen's book quoted above (pages 116-119). I believe these are

due to Eisenstein's unique perfection in arranging his shots rather than to conscious organization during shooting, because I find that equivalent passages occur in American talkies, e.g., in *The Long Voyage Home* (1940, by John Ford).

Much must depend upon the cameraman's (inborn?) ability to cover the sequence with shots which inherently match one another. In this connection it is interesting to note the fact that Tissé was a news-reel cameraman before he joined Eisenstein: presumably his expressive, narrative use of the dynamic camera-angle promoted him to his position with Eisenstein. In contrast to the subjective



Fig. 5. *The Odessa Steps*. A shot from the most shattering sequence ever put on the screen.

power of his mid shot and long shot compositions, his close-ups are unimpressive, depending on the objective appeal of their subject—as one might expect from a man trained in the news-reel field.

In contrast to the bright yawls scenes, which occupy the first 115 feet of the reel, the construction of the steps sequence depends far more on direction and cutting than on photographic artistry. By sheer perfection of his arrangement of shots, Eisenstein has created the most shattering 5½ minutes ever put on the screen. The time factor alone is a point of interest. The descent of the steps by the lines of soldiers could, in fact, occupy no more than two minutes: and so in the course of the dramatic construction, the time factor is expanded threefold.

A title: *Suddenly*—starts the sequence, followed by flashes of a girl's head, mid shot of the feet of the crowd starting to move down, (including a legless man and culminating in the approach of a patterned parasol right up

to the lens—a pointless effect), then symbolic long shot of the legless man's uneasy but rapid flight (the oppressed weak). Then in a mighty long shot looking down the steps, taken from a monument in the town with a statue commanding the foreground, the first line of soldiers appears in the bottom of the frame . . .

In a complementary wide-angle shot from the bottom, the crowd rushes down. Then the first shot is fired : but we do not see it . . . instead, brilliantly—

C.S. a man's knees slowly sag forwards . . . 45 frames.

M.S. (pan down) a man throws out his arm . . . 9 frames.

C.S. (pan down) man collapses on steps . . . 15 frames.

C.S. (as first shot) knees—finish of collapse 7 frames.

The second and third of these shots were probably shot as one, four or five frames being cut from the middle to heighten the impact : the effect is of the steps rushing up to meet the eye of the falling man, added power being achieved by showing another falling man in the same shot. Then in long shot the man's collapse is finally concluded.

Spacious Tracking Shot

More soldiers advance : and in a spacious tracking-shot from a high level the camera covers a portion of the crowds racing wildly downwards. Detail mid shots show some taking shelter at the sides. One cynical long shot is framed in the foreground by a tree, moving softly in the sunny breeze. Then another volley is fired and one pitiful victim is a child (seen waving, earlier, with his mother). The mother pauses : looks round : and cries out in a close-up of tragic intensity : and turns back to her son.

Another woman, of head-schoolmistress type, addresses a section of the crowd . . . "Go—beseech them—" They fearfully huddle together. Shouting emotionally, the mother bears her boy up the steps. A line of soldiers stops : their shadows underline their menace : the camera tracks back till the arm of the officer appears in the frame : as she sinks to her knees they fire and she falls backwards. This is covered in four shots, for cutting emphasis.

Dramatic use is made of shadows : the sun shines down the steps and harsh contrast is achieved by means of mirror reflectors in some shots looking up the steps.

Then another volley, and another, from the inexorable lines of soldiers : and below, mounted Cossacks charge through those who are escaping. . . . And then comes the final tragic episode, as a young mother is caught with her pram on the steps : in mid shot she

frantically leans over and kisses the baby, then turns round : a close-up flashes her fear : in mid shot she stands braced, shielding the pram ; a cut-in close-up shows the baby, disturbed. Then . . .

L.S. (feet only) A line of soldiers frames
halts and . . . 51

L.S. (looking along line of rifles) . . . fires. 22

FC.S. The mother cries out and 17

FC.S. her hands clutch at her chest, 60

FC.S. her head sways backwards : 23

C.S. the pram wheels hover at the top step : 30

FC.S. her head sways forwards : 54

FC.S. her hands clutch at her chest. 21

L.S. Massacre at foot of steps continues. 67

FC.S. Her hands. Her fingers are covered with blood : 35

FC.S. her eyes close. Her head sinks out of the frame 84

CM.S. She sinks down against pram. 42

L.S. A line of soldiers proceeds away down the steps 28

M.S. Baby in pram : 49

C.S. pram wheels hover on top step 15

L.S. (feet only) A line of soldiers advances 30

L.S. (along rifles) they advance . . . 28

M.S. The mother strives to move forward but . . . 24

M.S. . . . sinks back against the pram . . . 27

C.S. Pram wheels move . . . 16

M.S. Mother sinks right back, helplessly . . . 11

M.S. (tracking) Pram jolts down steps : 45

CM.S. pram moves forward : 17

C.S. pram wheel moves as mother's head falls against it : 14

C.S. wheel moves on : 7

C.S. the schoolmistress shouts in horror 8

And the pram jolts down, miraculously straight down the middle, shown in numerous shots (Still 5) till it reaches the bottom and tips grotesquely over, an unforgettable symbol of innocence caught in the chaos of horror.

Particularly noteworthy in the above quoted extract is the way the time factor has been spun out : the emphasis, also, due to repetition, the pushing away of the pram being shown twice : the jumbled-up shot lengths which cause an emotional confusion as opposed to the precise rhythm of cutting to a pattern of related lengths.

The revenge is shown symbolically. A slowly-turning gun turret represents the ship, a group of statues the military H.Q. One shot is fired, an explosion is shown ; then come three short shots—a stone lion sleeping, a lion with open eyes, and a lion rampant ; then another explosion. End of reel 4.

(Continued on page 32)

Wilfred Lawson and Mary Jerrold in a scene from "The Man at the Gate," released this month. This film is reviewed below.

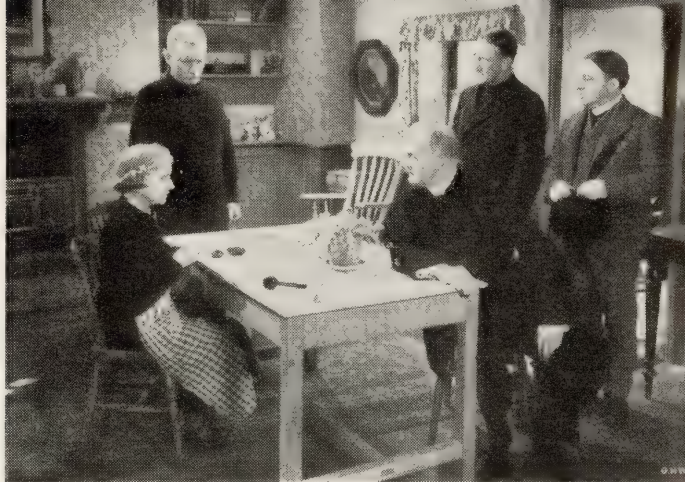
Good Enough in 1935

but not in 1941

IN the release list for July issued by the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association there are thirteen films. I must be honest with you and confess that two of them, which you will probably find the most entertaining, and which have been very well received, I believe, by the critics, I have not been able to see. They are *Come Live With Me* (M-G-M), directed by Clarence Brown, with James Stewart, Hedy Lamarr and Ian Hunter, and *The Letter* (Warner), directed by William Wyler, with Bette Davis and Herbert Marshall.

The first is a romantic comedy of a young Viennese girl who, to remain in America and continue her *affaire* with a wealthy publisher (already married) has to find an American husband: the choice falls on a penniless author, Bill Smith, who writes a novel on the situation, makes money on it, and ends up by winning (of course) the affections of the young Viennese. The trade press give enthusiastic praise to its direction, acting, photography and musical score. *The Letter* is a tragedy, adapted from the well-known Somerset Maugham story. I understand it contains some exceptionally fine photography.

I should perhaps bracket with the films I have not seen another which was trade-shown so long ago (eleven months, to be exact) that it has already become a little hazy in my memory: I mean *Conquest of the Air* (United Artists), a documentary survey of the history of aviation. Few films can have had a more chequered career. It began as one of Alexander Korda's most ambitious ideas, but dragged on month after month,



From among the films to be seen at your cinema this month, our contributor singles out an interesting British film with a religious background.

By **ERNEST LINDGREN**
(Curator, National Film Library)

and even year after year, without seeing the light of day. I believe almost everyone in the film industry must have had a hand in it at one time or the other. It seems to have been as tardy in coming to the screen as it was in being made.

If you see it you will probably wonder what all the fuss was about. It is just like an ordinary interest film, with running commentary, running for 71 minutes instead of the usual twenty: its chief attraction is a number of newsreel scenes of exceptional interest.

Ride, Kelly, Ride (20th Century Fox), directed by Norman Foster, with Eugene Pallette, Marvin Stephens, and Rita Quigley, has a very third-rate story. A young cowboy trains as a jockey, refuses to become mixed up with the shadier sides of racing, is fouled himself and goes to hospital with a dislocated shoulder. When he learns that the jockey of the horse owned by his girl's father, which he was to have ridden, has been bribed to lose, he breaks out of hospital, gets to the race-track, and—well, you all know the rest.

The one thing which lifts this story a degree or two out of its class is a sense of realism about the racing-stable scenes. My own hunch is that when the producers

decided to make this film they left the studios behind them and took their unit out, lock, stock and barrel, on to an actual racecourse for most of the scenes. (They made an interest short out of the same material at the same time.) It is extraordinary how refreshing the real thing is on the screen, even with the most tawdry kind of penny novelette story.

Curiously enough it isn't always the best or most polished production which exercises one's critical faculties most actively or most profitably. I am not sure that one cannot more often learn by seeing films as they shouldn't be made, rather than by seeing them as they should. I should not say, for example, that *The Man at the Gate*, which is in this month's releases, is by any means among the best of them: but it is one which has given me most cause for thought. That is probably because religious films have always been a matter of some interest to me.

One cannot begin discussing religious films perhaps without first making clear what one means by religion. I use the term in its very widest sense. I can express my feeling most simply, and without going into involved arguments, by saying that I consider such a man as Bernard Shaw, who belongs to no church as far as I know, to be as religious as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Where Lies the Blame?

I believe there is a place for religion, conceived on this wide basis, in the modern world. I believe that there are many who hold the same view. And if there are many who do not, and who consider religion to have outlived its usefulness, I would lay the blame for that at the doors of the churches who, by their insistence on rigid creeds built on outworn superstitions, have alienated those who can see no farther than their noses and who think there can be no religion outside a church.

What, you will say, has all this to do with film-making? Well, one of the most significant signs of the spiritual bankruptcy of the churches, to my mind, is the way in which they have failed to make any effective use whatsoever of this new medium. Clergymen complain that their churches are empty, and yet they virtually ignore the cinema, a vast platform of twenty-three million people (in peace-time) a week. Wasn't it Milton who said something about "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed"?

The Man at the Gate (General Film Distributors) is an attempt to make use of this platform. Although made for commercial release its purpose is to put over a religious message. It was directed by Norman Walker (who will be remembered for his *Turn of the Tide*) and the chief part

is taken by Wilfred Lawson. It is a story of the Foleys, a Cornish family of fisherfolk. Mrs. Foley, the mother, who has already lost some of her family at sea, awaits the return of her husband, Henry, and their son, John, from a storm. Henry is brought in exhausted: John has been lost in the wreck.

Thereafter, Mrs. Foley persuades her remaining son, George, who is to marry Ruth, to settle down in a shop; and Henry, too, is induced to give up the sea and take to market gardening. Then the war breaks out and George joins the Navy as a wireless operator. His mother quarrels with him over his decision, and declares, in her embitterment, that she has lost her faith in God. Some time later comes the news that his ship has been sunk and he is missing. Mrs. Foley's hopes receive their final blow when Henry decides he can no longer resist the call to join the lifeboat crew.

The King's Broadcast

It is in this frame of mind that Mrs. Foley by chance hears the closing words of the King's 1939 Christmas broadcast, quoting the lines from Miss Haskin's poem, "The Man at the Gate." Immediately her outlook is changed: her faith is rekindled. She goes out to help Henry prepare for the lifeboat. Finally there comes an Admiralty message announcing that George is safe, and (to quote the distributor's publicity sheet) she "returns home rejoicing in the news of her son's rescue and her new-found belief."

Technically the film is an undistinguished one. It is similar in style to *Turn of the Tide*, but what was an achievement in 1935 is no longer so in 1941. What many people will chiefly admire in it are its finely photographed shots of natural Cornish backgrounds; but they are equally likely to alienate those who cannot regard picture-postcard views, however delightful, as an adequate substitute for good film craftsmanship.

What ruins it as a religious film is its poor psychology, its ineffective construction, and its lack of proper motivation. It is conceivable that a woman placed in Mrs. Foley's circumstances might become disillusioned. But is it likely that her faith, lost as the culmination of years of harsh experience, would be restored in an instant by hearing a chance quotation?

It might, perhaps, if her mind had been working, even subconsciously, in that direction. In an attempt to reconcile Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus with modern psychological knowledge, theologians suggest that the effect of his previous persecution of the Christians had been subconsciously to undermine his animosity against them, and that the apparently sudden

conversion was but the visible result of latent mental processes. But we are not given any indication of such processes in Mrs. Foley's case. The change is apparently instantaneous, miraculous. If this were a minor point of psychology it might be

must be related to the world as we know it.

Despite this film I came away from it as convinced as ever that there is a place for religion on the screen. I know that our old friend, Andrew Buchanan, for one, would agree with me. But who is going to show the



Wm. Freshman and Kathleen O'Regan (both on right) are seen in this shot from "The Man at the Gate." The title of the picture is taken from that of the poem quoted by the King in his 1939 Christmas broadcast, the closing words of which are heard in the film.

overlooked; but it is the focal point of the whole film.

Again, what are we to say of the news of George's safety? The unmistakable implication is that this is a reward, as it were, for Mrs. Foley's return to faith. It is not the cynics alone who will maintain that life (or God, if you will) doesn't work like that; or who will ask: What would her new faith have been worth if George had been drowned? It might be argued that this is just a matter of story construction; but story construction

way to put it there? Not the commercial producers, and not, apparently, the church. Is there no amateur group which will have the courage to venture into this unexplored field? I am sure that the important thing in all amateur film work is to have a purpose—not merely to drift aimlessly from one production to another. Well, here is a purpose for the taking: somewhat unfashionable these days, it is true, but surely that is half its attraction.

CAMEO FILMS FROM ODD SHOTS

HERE'S another example of what can (advantageously) be done with odd shots found in one's scrap box. A recent delve into such a box resulted in the discovery of a shot of a car with pushed-in radiator and front wings, taken at the time of a minor accident to a friend in the belief that such a shot "would be sure to come in useful some day." It never did, of course. Further search yielded a shot of two people standing in a road, looking round and talking to each other rather aimlessly. From these shots, with the addition of one title, a neat "film" was "produced" as follows:—

- (1) Shot of pushed-in car.
- (2) Shot of one person turning to the other and starting to speak.
- (3) Title: "I never did like driving, much."
- (4) The person finishes speaking.

This turned out very effectively, and was probably made successful by the supremely casual air of the speaker, who had, in fact, merely been making trite comments on the beauties of the surrounding countryside as the cameraman exhorted him to "do or say something." The four shots can be made into a complete film by adding a lead title ("What the L?"), arranging a fade-out at the end of shot 4 (by means of darkening solution), and finally attaching a "The End" title.

Then, of course, a collection of 'opposite,' but apposite shots, will always come in useful. "The Human Zoo" might be the main title of a few such shots, pictures of animals being immediately followed (or vice versa) by pictures of people even remotely resembling them or their characteristic actions. But the subjects need to be of a genial disposition!

DO IT YOURSELF!

practical ideas for the handyman

Designing and Constructing a DIMMER

Each month our contributor supplies worthwhile practical ideas: things to make and things to do. Suggestions for gadgets are welcomed.

By G. A. GAULD, B.Sc.

IN view of the season of the year, it had been my intention to turn to camera topics during the next few months, but judging by the letters I receive, it appears that the majority of my readers are still far more interested in matters concerning projection and the editing bench.

The reason for the latter interest is not very hard to find. No matter what the time of year or weather, there is always work to be done, piecing up a collection of new shots or revising an old film. As for the former, it is evident from my correspondence that many of my readers are engaged on good works with their projectors in camp and village, beyond reach of the professional entertainment in the towns. Hitherto, no doubt, the show was confined to the family circle. Now that it is taken out "on the road" new problems have arisen; new difficulties have to be tackled and overcome.

Projection Cabinets

Some interest has been shown in the earlier articles which appeared in these pages relating to projection cabinets with the resulting simplification of the transport question and the handy control of lighting effects. Although at the time, I referred more particularly to the drawing-room cinema, the same principles apply and can be readily adapted to the outside show. On the assumption that the controls are mounted either on the projection cabinet or grouped on a panel, handy to the machine, the leads to the proscenium (which in the drawing-room cinema were run along the picture rail) may be replaced by a multi-core cable for the portable unit.

On several occasions I have mentioned dimmers. As the subject of a lamp

construction to those of a dimmer, which presents a similar problem. Simple to make, a dimmer will provide all that is needed to obtain professional results in your lighting effects and give a final polish to your show when you take it "on the road."

In an earlier article, I suggested that all the controls, including dimmers, should be mounted inside the projection cabinet. A reader questioned the advisability of this, on the grounds that the heat generated by the dimmer would give trouble. If a dimmer were to generate a considerable amount of heat, it certainly would be troublesome, but there is no reason why it should.

If the dimmer has an "off" position, i.e., when the lights are dimmed right down, the current is finally switched right off, the heating effect will be confined to the few moments during which the dimmer is in operation. The amperage handled will be very small in comparison with, for example, a lamp resistance. In fact, the amount of heat given off by the type of dimmer under consideration will be so small as to be of no account, and therefore there should be no objection to its inclusion inside a closed projection cabinet or control panel.

Under these conditions, the construction is greatly simplified. No additional casing is required to house the resistance, and the

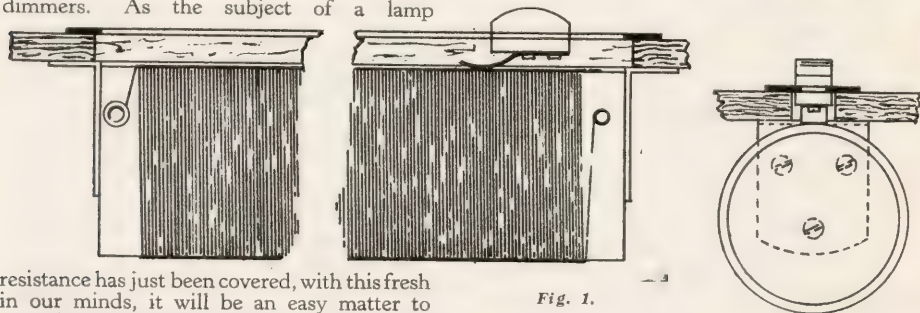


Fig. 1.

resistance has just been covered, with this fresh in our minds, it will be an easy matter to extend the same principles of design and

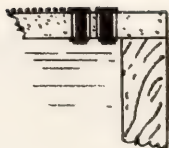
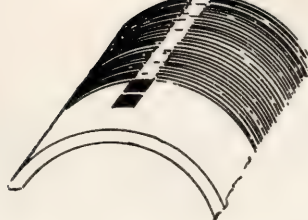


Fig. 2.

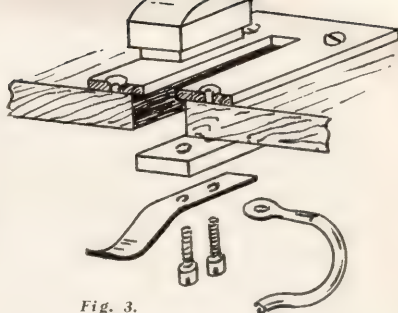


Fig. 3.

slides which carry the cursor may be mounted directly on the outside of the box or cabinet.

As was the case with the lamp resistance, it will be easier and I hope, clearer, to describe the design and construction of a dimmer of specific size. The reader may then adjust the values to suit his own particular case.

It will be assumed that lamps totalling 250 watts are to be controlled by the dimmer, operating on the standard mains voltage of 230. With no additional resistance in the circuit, the lamps will consume a current of :

$$\frac{250 \text{ (watts)}}{230 \text{ (volts)}} \\ \text{or } 1.087 \text{ amps.}$$

On first thoughts, it would appear that to black out the lights, the dimmer would be required to reduce the current to nil. To do this, the dimmer would have to be of infinite resistance. This is neither feasible nor necessary. A lamp filament is, as we have already seen, nothing more than a special form of resistance ; the more current it takes, the hotter it becomes. Obviously therefore, the filament will require an appreciable amount of current to bring it up to visible red heat.

If then, the current flowing in the circuit is reduced to a point slightly below this value, the desired result will be attained. In practice, if the current is reduced to about one eighth of its normal value, the lamps will be blacked out and may then be switched off entirely without any noticeable effect.

Variation in Light and Current

Incidentally, the light emitted from the filament of a lamp is not directly proportional to the current flowing through it. That is to say, a variation near the full power of the lamp will produce a variation in the light emitted far greater than a similar variation made in the value of the current at a point well below the normal operating value. It would be quite possible, by suitably grading the windings of the resistance, to construct a dimmer of linear characteristics in which the intensity of light would be dimmed uniformly as the cursor is moved along the slide. For our purpose, such an arrangement is unnecessarily complicated ; the same effect may be obtained with a former, uniformly wound, by sliding the cursor, slowly at first, then faster, as the lights dim out.

Our object, therefore, is to determine the resistance required to reduce the current of 1.087 amps. flowing in the circuit, to one eighth of that amount, i.e., 0.136 amps.

resistance of the lamps already in the circuit is obtained from Ohm's Law ($C=E/R$)

$$\text{Resistance (Ohms)} = \frac{\text{Voltage}}{\text{Current (Amps.)}} \\ = \frac{230}{1.087} \\ = 211.6 \text{ Ohms.}$$

The value of the required resistance is obtained from the same formula :

$$\text{Total Resistance} = \frac{230}{\text{Current} \times \frac{1}{8}} \\ R + 211.6 = \frac{230}{0.136}$$

from which, $R = 1480$ Ohms (approx.)

If you will refer to the table on page 9 of the April issue of A.C.W., you will find that No. 32 gauge wire will carry 0.94 amps. Although 1.087 amps. will be carried by the dimmer, it is only for a fraction of a second, as the current will rapidly fall to the minimum

value of 0.136 amps. This gauge of wire will therefore be quite suitable and as it has a resistance of 7349 Ohms per 1000 yards, a length of :

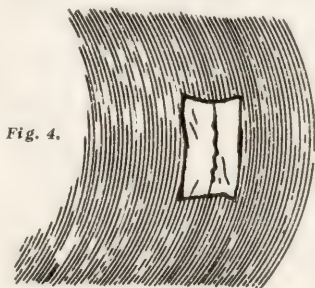


Fig. 4.

$$1000 \times \frac{1480}{7349} \\ \text{or } 201.4 \text{ yards}$$

will be required. The diameter of this wire is stated to be .0108" so that on a former three inches in diameter, the wire, close wound, will take up a length of :

$$201.4 \times \frac{7}{22} \times \frac{36}{3} \times .0108 \text{ inches} \\ \text{i.e., about 7 inches.}$$

To allow for slight spreading of the wire and the necessary clear portion at each end, a former 10 inches long should be provided.

Since the question of heat dispersal is of small account, and as smooth action is required for a dimmer, it is desirable that the coils of wire should be wound in close contact. It

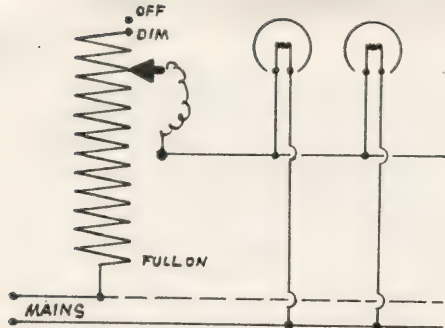


Fig. 5.

is therefore essential that it should be insulated. The most suitable wire for this purpose is "Eureka" Heavy Oxydised Resistance Wire, manufactured by the Vactite Wire Company (1919) Ltd., 24, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1. The oxide on the surface of the wire provides an insulation which is quite unaffected by heat.

A length of 3" diameter asbestos-cement rainwater pipe from a builder's yard provides the ideal former. A cardboard tube will serve if the former is not readily obtainable, but the fine wire has a tendency to dig in and produce an uneven surface when wound on tightly. To reduce this to a minimum, the cardboard tube should first be well doped with shellac varnish (shellac flakes from the chemist dissolved in methylated spirits).

In either case, the ends are plugged with a short block of wood, holes being drilled through the centre of each to take a temporary axle for winding on the wire. A stand may be made up from Meccano or bits from the scrap box for this purpose, and a handle rigged up so that the whole former may be rotated about its axis. The former is drilled about half an inch from either end and terminals fitted to take the ends of the resistance wire. The wire is prepared by scraping the oxide off the end and soldering on a tag which is clipped under the terminal at one end of the former.

Winding

The job is then ready for the process of winding. Here again, the help of a friend to turn the handle will be invaluable. With the bobbin of wire mounted on a nail driven into the bench, both hands of the operator are left free to guide the wire carefully into place and maintain a steady, even tension as it is wound into position on the former.

Although the coils of wire are in contact with each other and should therefore remain in position, the action of the sliding contact will tend to disturb them. It is therefore advisable to use a binder or adhesive to hold the wire in contact with the surface of the former.

In the case of the asbestos-cement tube, a coat of ordinary Portland cement paste should be applied before winding is commenced. This will adhere to the former and squeeze up into the coils as the wire is wound on.

When the paste finally sets, the coils will be locked securely in position. To complete the job, the finished resistance should be given two or three coats of thin cement paste, allowing time for each coat to set before the next is applied.

If a cardboard former is used, after preparation with the shellac varnish, the same material may be used as a binder. The varnish should be brushed on at intervals just ahead of the wire as it is wound on. A coat over the completed windings will make certain that the coils are held securely in place.

Another variety of former capable of withstanding a greater amount of heat than the above, assuming that the asbestos-cement tube cannot be obtained, may be made up as follows. A cardboard tube is first coated with a thin paste made up by mixing a quantity of very fine sand with glue size, i.e., very thin and "watery" glue. This rough surface is then levelled up by the application of several successive coats of thin cement paste containing a trace of glue. The final surface obtained will be very similar to that of the asbestos-cement tube, and the subsequent treatment when winding on the resistance wire is the same as for that type of former.

Protecting End Coils

The special double contact at the end of the windings will be noted in Fig. 2. A single contact is fitted at the other end. These provide the "off" switch and at the same time protect the end coils of wire. The action of the sliding contact rubbing over the end coils would soon cut through the wire, and in addition, where the circuit is broken at the switch, sparking tends to take place and this would rapidly burn it away. Holes are drilled through the former to take the contacts. I found that these were easily made up from brass paper fasteners, soldered to the wire and secured in place with glue or cement. They should, of course, be finished off, flush with the wire.

Along the line of the sliding contact, the insulating oxide will have to be rubbed off in a strip about a quarter of an inch wide. This should be done very carefully, so as not to disturb the insulation between the wires, by rubbing the coils with a piece of emery cloth wrapped round a short length of wood of the required width. Long strokes should be used from one end to the other, each time.

The slides for the cursor are made up from strips of brass $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{16}$ ". Two lengths are cut to the required length and set parallel, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " apart, by soldering in a distance piece of the same material at each end. Countersunk holes are drilled at suitable intervals to take the wood screws by which the guides are fixed over the slot cut in the face of the projection cabinet or control box. The arrangement is shown in detail in Fig. 3.

The resistance is fixed in place beneath the slot by two angles made up from sheet brass and screwed to the wood plugs at each end, as indicated in Fig. 1.

As the dimmer will rarely, if ever, become hot, the design of the cursor may be simplified in comparison with that required for the lamp resistance. A hard insulating material such as ebonite may be used for the body. The knob portion is filed up to fit the guides, holes being drilled and tapped to take the screws which fix the cover piece below the guides in position. Details are shown in



Fig. 6.

Fig. 3. The sliding contact is attached by the same screws and is made from "shim" brass, obtainable at any garage, or ordinary sheet, hammered out to make it springy and filed up smooth. Matters should be so arranged that the contact maintains a light but even pressure throughout the length of its travel.

Provision for the take-up from the sliding contact may be made on the same lines as that of the lamp resistance, using a second spring in contact with a "busbar" running parallel with the guides. A simpler method, and equally effective as there is little danger of the insulation being burnt, is to connect a short length of flex between the cursor and a terminal fixed about half way along the resistance.

Although this dimmer has been designed for controlling lamps totalling 250 watts, its use is not confined to a circuit of exactly that wattage. If the power of the lamps is somewhat greater, the dimming effect will be

maintained, the only disadvantage being that the heating effect will be greater. At the same time, it must be remembered that the dimmer will only carry the full current for a second or two, as the current will rapidly decrease as the cursor is moved along. An overload of more than 50% however, should not be attempted as there might be considerable danger of fusing the wire.

If the wattage controlled is less than 250, no harmful effects will be experienced, but the degree of dimming will be reduced. That is to say, the lights may not be quite blacked out before being completely extinguished. This is not a very serious disadvantage, but it is obviously better to design the dimmer correctly in accordance with the anticipated conditions under which it is to operate.

Making a Join

From the point of view of mechanical strength, it is not advisable to use resistance wire of less than 34 gauge. Should the wattage to be controlled be very small and call for the use of a finer gauge wire, then a longer length of No. 34 gauge should be used instead.

Finally, you will be fairly lucky if you succeed in completing the winding of this thin, fragile wire without the misfortune of a break. The correct method of making a join is shown in Fig. 4. The two ends are scraped bare, twisted together and run with the minimum amount of solder possible. As the winding on of the wire continues, a small piece of mica or paper dipped in shellac varnish is slipped underneath the joint to insulate it from the adjacent windings. The joint should, of course, be made well clear of the path of the cursor.

A diagram showing the method of connecting up the dimmer with a series of lamps is given in Fig. 5, and the finished job, mounted inside the projection cabinet, is shown in Fig. 6.

JAMMING

A certain amount of jamming is inseparable from 9.5mm.; it is a problem that has exercised the experts since the advent of this gauge. A good tip is to tap the charger gently on a hard surface just before first loading it into the camera. That shakes out the top coil, which otherwise may tend to stick. Be careful, too, to see that the film is not hanging too loosely on the bottom core when you load.

What is the most out-of-the-way place in which you have ever given a film show? The British Council reports that its official news-reel "British News," is shown in Gambia from a river boat to a crowd of natives on the bank.

Letters to the Editor

CONVERTING 200B TO SOUND

Sir,—I have been reading your interesting magazine now for some time and enjoy your 'Famous Library Films' series immensely. I should like to see in this series reviews of some of the modern classics (sound films) e.g., "Turn of the Tide," "The Edge of the World," "Rebecca," etc.

I am using a Pathe 200B projector and have converted it to show 9.5mm. sound films by means of what I think a novel method. I project the image of the continuously moving sound track by means of a standard $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. projector lens over a roft. throw, and then place the photo-electric cell roft. from the projector inside a metal container, the front of which has a slit about 2 in. long and $\frac{1}{16}$ th in. wide. This acts as the standard .001 in. slit, as the sound track image is amplified so that the ratio of slit to image is correct. The photo-electric cell anode must be long enough to contain the whole of the sound track width. Mine is about 2 ins. long, so all is well.

Being a radio enthusiast as well as a cine fan I soon rigged up a pre-amplifier for the cell (contained in the same housing) and connected this up to my gramophone amplifier. The resulting quality is quite good, though I have not finished experimenting yet. Speech is perfect. I believe the quality of the projector lens affects the quality of the sound a good deal, as a blurred image will attenuate the higher frequencies.

The advantage of this system is that it can be constructed by the average amateur and does not involve the complicated optical system necessary when building the complete sound head in the projector. The exciter lamp consists of a 12 volt 3 amp. car head-lamp focussed on to the sound gate by a 2 in. condenser. The sound gate I designed simply to avoid film scratch; it consists of two presser pads lined with velvet, with very slight tension.

The 200B is ideal for this conversion, as there is plenty of free space between the bottom of the picture gate and the take-up sprocket. The regulation of the existing AC/DC motor is quite good and introduces no noticeable speech wobble, though I intend fitting a synchronous motor in the near future.

Salisbury.
R. W. HALL, B.Sc.

S.M.P.E. AND D.I.N.

Sir,—In your reply to an enquiry as to the difference between the S.M.P.E. and D.I.N. standards of 16mm. sound film you mention

The Editor is always glad to hear from readers, but does not necessarily endorse the views expressed.

that the drawings for the original S.M.P.E. standard were misread and the standard reversed from left to right. It is, I believe, true that the Germans misread the S.M.P.E. drawings, but on the evidence I had at the time, they proposed to have the emulsion on the front of the film (facing the screen).

At the same time, however, the British Acoustic firm brought on to the market a 16mm. sound projector in which the film was turned round from back to front to produce the standard later to be known as D.I.N. I spoke to men concerned with the early demonstration models of this machine, pointing out the change and they told me that the change was deliberate.

I raised the matter in the "British Journal of Photography" (19th May, 1933, p. 288, "Sprocket") pointing out the discrepancies between the S.M.P.E. standard and the different standards to be used on the British Acoustic and Siemens machines. The late Dr. Kurt Morsbach, the Siemens designer, came post haste to this country and the result of the deliberations was the standardisation of the so-called D.I.N. In my opinion there was no good reason for the change so far as the public interest is concerned. It did not drive the S.M.P.E. standard from the British market and the confusion gravely retarded the use of 16mm. sound film in this country until the S.M.P.E. was eventually accepted as standard for educational purposes.

I may add that one camera manufacturer told me that the original S.M.P.E. drawings could be misread to give the D.I.N. standard. This is not so. It is also illuminating to notice the way in which a standard adopted in this country was given a German name (Deutschen Industrie Normen).
Old Colwyn.
HARRY WALDEN, A.R.P.S.

AMATEUR NEWS REELS

Sir,—I would like to register my vote towards the idea of a 'Silent Film Society' as set out by Mr. W. H. Bolton in your May issue. If such a society was formed, it could also devote a little attention to a news reel section. So many people find that the amount of time taken to build up a complete news reel results in the first shots being old and out-of-date. Perhaps cine enthusiasts

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could send up one news shot, and the reward for a successful entry be the complete reel, with other copies for sale or hire by non-contributors, as suggested for travel films in Mr. Bolton's letter.

2nd/LT. R. H. MORGAN.

AMATEUR FILM LIBRARY

Sir,—The schemes put forward in recent issues for the inauguration of a library of the best amateur films, to be circulated in the same way as the professional films in the existing libraries, are all very interesting, and such a venture is certainly to be commended. But I make bold to say that it can never be established by an individual alone, or group of people. The scheme is too big for that. It needs to be handled by an existing organisation that has the confidence of the amateur cine public.

I suggest that the Institute of Amateur Cinematographers or the Federation of Cinematograph Societies really get down to cases and takes it over, the much-needed publicity to be provided by A.C.W. Perhaps the officials of these organisations would give us their views on the matter. I feel that were either of these bodies to handle the scheme they would experience a considerable increase of membership, drawn for the most part from many amateurs who would not normally be interested in joining either the Institute or the Federation.

F. J. TURNER.
Exeter.

KINE

Sir,—D.R.B. waxes sarcastic at my aside that the R.P.S. still uses "kine" instead of "cine," "for the sake of correctness" and attempts to pick me up on common usage of the words. In the first place, the words are invented words derived from the Greek, the originating Greek word being spelt with a K. In the second place, the use of kine by the R.P.S. goes back a long way before amateur cine. Indeed, it is only for amateur use that the use of "cine" has become established. At one time the "K" was almost as common as the "C."

To-day there is still the "British Kinematograph Society"; which is the professional technical society, while one of the most important trade journals is the "Kine Weekly." I have also just turned out of my bookshelf "Kinematograph Studio Technique" which is still published by Pitmans. Personally, I prefer "Cine" and we got this form for the Cine Federation. But the use of "Kine" for professional work is correct, having regard to its derivation, and is by no means obsolete in use.

Old Colwyn.

HARRY WALDEN.

Round the Societies

THE Federation of Cinematograph Societies (Hon. Sec.: G. Wain, A.R.P.S., 170, Dowson Road, Hyde, Cheshire) is to give a show of some of the prize-winning films in the Inter-Club 1941 Competition on the afternoon of Saturday, June 28th in the cinema room of the College of Technology, Manchester, 1. There will be a nominal charge of 6d. for admission, and a stamped addressed envelope should be sent with your application. The musical accompaniment will be provided by members of the Salford C.S. and projection will be by the Hyde C.S.

It is hoped to publish the result of the competition next month. The judges are: E. John Martin, A.R.P.S. (Stoke C.S.), Harry Walden, A.R.P.S. and Gordon S. Malthouse.

The Federation announces the enrolment of its first Scottish club—the Edinburgh C.S.

The scenario for the first film to be undertaken by the **Armley C.S.** (Hon. Sec.: Walter Greenwood, 10, Scarborough Street, Leeds, 12) has now been completed. Dealing as it does with the society's activities, it is hoped that it will provide useful propaganda for the amateur cine movement. It will be used as a publicity trailer at all of the society's shows. Treatment and shooting script are now in the hands of a member who has had considerable experience of both sound and silent work.

Armley has benefited by the admission to membership of a well known Leeds amateur, Lawrence C. Boynton, who has for many years processed his own films. The advantage to the society will be that "rushes" will be available for projection on the same day on which they were taken, and this is thought to represent a direct and interesting stimulus.

Membership has shown a gradual improvement since the inception of this new but progressive society, but there is still room for more enthusiasts who can spare a little time weekly as a relaxation from the war effort. The secretary would be pleased to know if any society has any old cinema seats for disposal; they are needed for the theatre.

The programme secretary of the Salford C.S. is now V. J. Dillon, of 3, Osborne Drive, Pendlebury, Lancs., to whom all correspondence regarding the loan of films should be addressed.

A writer in a recent issue of "Movie News" (official organ of the **Australian A.C.S.**) puts forward the point of view that unsuspected

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* * *

The most important development since the last report of **Isis Motion Pictures** (Hon. Sec.: P. S.-G. Spencer, St. John's College, Oxford) has been the holding of a film show which, it is hoped, will be the first of a series. A gratifying profit was made—very satisfactory for a first effort.

One of the members, W. N. Francis, of Lincoln College, recently gave an illuminating talk on a film he made in the Mediterranean just before the outbreak of war, the screening of the film being a feature of the meeting. Progress on the society's production continues.

"The Battleship Potemkin"

(Continued from page 20)

The purely cinematic symbol of the lion jumping to life is a brilliant conception, stressing the battleship's power. As a matter of interest neither the lions, the explosions, nor the group of statues were shot at Odessa; but at such diverse places as Livadea in the Crimea and at Moscow—a fine example of how geographical relationships are established in film editing.

After the steps sequence, the fifth and last reel inevitably comes as an anticlimax: particularly as it is perfectly obvious that the rebel ship *will* be acclaimed (though here the highbrows praised the suspense, whereas they scorned the equally cinematic suspense of an American melodrama whose happy ending was actually not one whit more obvious). Furthermore, Eisenstein has slightly erred with over-emphasis in his desperate attempt to infuse the maximum of suspense during the night and the maximum of jubilation at the reception by the rest of the fleet.

The reel opens with a vigorously presented mass meeting aboard the ship, which resolves to meet the fleet. Night is then indicated by finely composed sky shots of which, however, one is spoiled by an obviously day-time sky and the other by trees, ludicrous in a sea scene and a careless error. Those on watch are dramatically portrayed. One shot of lights in the black waters of the sea is unique and fascinating. There is some unconscious humour and some continuity confusion at the

daybreak. Then the fleet is sighted and action stations are manned. Detail shots of manned guns, engine pistons, the wake and the smoke trail are intercut with long shots of the threatening guns. Then the J-O-I-N U-S signal is hoisted, all cheer, and the *Potemkin* sails through. In the last shot the bows approach right up to the camera, making a natural fade.

Such is the stuff of this remarkable and famous picture.

Of the brilliant musical score written for the film by Edmund Meisel, the best praise lies in recounting that the film was passed by the German censors only on condition that this accompaniment was not used. Another famous score by Meisel was for Ruttmann's impressionistic *Berlin*.

Turning once more to the mechanics of the production, one cannot but feel that Eisenstein realised he had something superlative in his conception of the Odessa Steps sequence, and accordingly went to all lengths to pass on this unique creative inspiration. The elaborate trolley specially built (its shadow can be seen in one tracking shot) the reflector set-ups, the absolute perfection of the acting types chosen, the very skill in the realisation that elementary continuity requirements would fade into insignificance in the protracted time factor—these points all go to prove that Eisenstein was indeed swayed by the immensity of this inspiration from the basic plan of the originally conceived film. And just as the Steps sequence is undoubtedly the measure of *Potemkin's* fame, so Eisenstein merits the crown of genius for this achievement.

TARNISHED LENSES

A reader in the Forces writes that he put away his camera in a safe on joining up and when, on getting leave, he took it out to use it again, he found that the lens had become tarnished.

The only cure possible for the amateur is to swab the lens with a piece of cotton wool just moist (not wet) with alcohol, and then polish off lightly with an old soft cotton handkerchief. If this does not remove the tarnish the only thing is to send the lenses for professional attention—and at the present time you may not get it!

The tarnish is usually the result of some impurity in the air: it will not affect the definition unless it is severe. It might be safest to put the camera and lenses in a tin box, and seal the lid with sticky tape, if you are unable to use it for a very considerable time.

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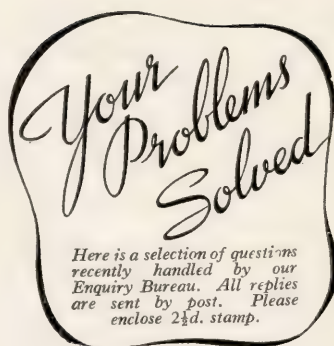
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I am worried by the presence of shiny patches on the emulsion of my copy of the Patheoscope film, "Faust." These patches extend throughout the four reels, sometimes at the edge of the picture, sometimes in the centre, sometimes around the perforations. The film projects slightly "hazy"—although it must be admitted that many of the German silents erred in that direction. I passed the film through a soft pad moistened with "Thawpit." No effect. I "scrubbed" selected patches. Again, no effect. I would mention that otherwise the film is in very good condition. Nor is there anything wrong with the optical system on my projector. Everything else focusses to pin-sharpness.

More important, can you give me full details of the best—and cheapest—means of renovation? "Faust" is the one classic that I have been able to procure for my library. I hope to keep it in first-class running order.—P.A.S.

The Peerless Process

The shiny patches on your film may be due to injudicious use of film preservative, or possibly to the film becoming damp and then drying in close juxtaposition to the back of the adjacent film. Your inability to affect the patches by the use of "Thawpit" seems to preclude any possibility of oil being the cause. The slight fuzziness in projection is typical of some printed down copies of the earlier films. We do not think the trouble is likely to be progressive.

A method of treatment which might be used is the Peerless Process, a proprietary method for which the agents are the Westminster Photographic Exchange, Ltd., Charing Cross Road branch. This consists of first thoroughly cleaning the film, and then injecting preservatives under vacuum conditions which cause them to be thoroughly absorbed into the film.

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Carbon tetrachloride, or one of the proprietary fluids containing it, can be used to clean the film by running it through a trough of the solution, but the method must not be repeated too often or the film will become brittle. 'Teitel' New Life is an excellent cleaner and preservative, but it is doubtful if it is still available. In the absence of this, any one of the proprietary preservatives, sparingly sprinkled on a pad and kept with the film in an air-tight tin, will retain its plasticity.

PROCESSING OF KODACHROME

A. de K.—The processing of Kodachrome is somewhat complex, and complete details are not normally available for amateur users. It involves the use of dye-coupling development in which certain substances, incorporated either in the sensitive material or in the developer, combine with the oxidation products of the developer to form coloured substances in direct proportion to the silver densities created during the process of development. After this development is

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Not only are there a number of stages in the complete operation of producing a multilayer subtractive colour picture of this type, but also each one must be rigidly controlled. The whole process is thus rather outside the scope of the ordinary worker, and Kodak provides, on the introduction of this film, a complete processing service.

There is a note to prevent film of this type being used to produce normal black and white images, which will be carried on three thin layers of emulsion rather than one thicker one.

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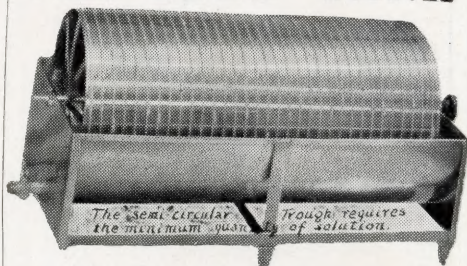
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